

Appl. No. 10/536,851
Reply to Office Action of May 26, 2009

REMARKS

Claims 12-31 are pending. Claims 14-23 have been withdrawn. Reconsideration is requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 12, 13, 24, 25, 30 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious on consideration of Golden. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

In part 6 of the Official Action, the Examiner indicates that Golden teaches a method as follows:

1. "Attaching around the ropes, lines or similar items a cleaning device...and a hydrodynamic drag structure"
2. "towing the ropes, lines, or similar items"
3. "which creates a drag with the hydrodynamic drag structure as the ropes, lines, or similar items is moved along its longitudinal axis, the drag having the effect of moving the cleaning device along the ropes, lines, or similar items relative to the ropes, lines, or similar items."

The process of claim 12 requires "attaching around the seismic streamer a cleaning appliance...and a hydrodynamic drag structure". In comparing the process of claim 12 with the Examiner's characterization of the Golden method, the "ropes, lines or similar items" are like the seismic streamer since the cleaning device and hydrodynamic drag structure get attached around them. In step (2) of the Examiner's characterization of Golden, ropes, lines, or similar items are towed. That is similar to "towing the seismic streamer" in the process of claim 12. With respect to step (3) of the Examiner's characterization of Golden, the Examiner uses the language "which creates a drag with the hydrodynamic drag structure as the ropes, lines or similar items is moved along its longitudinal axis". This language does not make sense. Are the ropes, lines or similar items moved along the longitudinal axis of the hydrodynamic drag structure? The language conveniently is confusing. Golden discloses that the cleaning device 20 is mounted on a deployed anchor chain 14 such that the anchor chain extends coaxially through the chain guides 35, 36 which serve to clean the anchor chain. A retrieval line 26 is hooked to one end of cleaning device 20, while a weight 29 is hooked to another end. The retrieval line is reciprocated so the bristles within the chain guides can clean the

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anchor chain. In step 1 of the Examiner's characterization of the Golden method, the cleaning device and hydrodynamic drag structure are attached around the anchor chain, not the "ropes, lines or similar items" that the Examiner indicates get towed in step 2. To further the confusion, the Examiner creates language following his characterization of the second step which indicates the third step, the language being "towing the ropes, lines, or similar items (Fig. 1), which creates a drag with the hydrodynamic drag structure as the ropes, lines or similar items is moved along its longitudinal axis, the drag having the effect of moving the cleaning device along the ropes, lines or similar items relative to the ropes, lines, or similar items." The cleaning device of Golden creates a hydrodynamic drag as it is moved, but it is moved along an anchor chain not along ropes, lines, or similar items which are needed to in fact move the cleaning device. The confusing use of language is not sufficient to make a prime facia case of obviousness with the disclosure of Golden when, in fact, Golden teaches a structure which is quite different from that being claimed in claim 12 and the claims which depend from it. The problem with Golden is that it does not teach a towing of a seismic streamer. Rather, Golden teaches a towing or reciprocating of the retrieval line 26 and weight 29 which moves the cleaning device 20. The hydrodynamic drag which is created by the cleaning device in Golden has no functional use. The hydrodynamic drag in the process of claim 12 has the functional use of slowing the movement of the hydrodynamic drag structure relative to the towed seismic streamer so that there is relative movement between the two. The process of claim 12 and the claims which depend from it do not follow from a consideration of Golden.

The Examiner rejected claims 26-27 and 29 under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious on consideration of Golden in view of Pickens. The Examiner also rejected claims 26-28 under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious on consideration of Golden in view of JP 6-165336.

It is requested that these rejections be withdrawn in view of the inapplicability of the Golden disclosure relative to the process claimed by the claims of the present invention. Because the Golden disclosure is inapplicable, use of it with these other references does not make a prime facia case of obviousness of the indicated claims.

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In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration is requested. Allowance of claims 12-13 and 24-31 at an early date is requested. Any questions regarding this communication can be directed to the undersigned attorney, Curtis B. Hamre, Reg. No. 29,165 at (612) 455-3802.



Dated: August 25, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

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By:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Curtis B. Hamre".

Curtis B. Hamre
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CBH/mz